

Juno e-mail printed Wed, 29 Apr 1998 11:34:45 , page 1

From: Sagiiton <Sagiiton@aol.com>
Return-path: <Sagiiton@aol.com>
To: REVMARGE@JUNO.COM
Date: Sat, 25 Apr 1998 10:43:38 EDT
Subject: Fwd: FYI
Message-ID: <9cfe1253.3541f69b@aol.com>
X-Status: Read
X-Mailer: AOL 3.0 16-bit for Windows sub 38

*women &
the church*

This is a multi-part message in MIME format.

--part0_893515418_boundary
Content-ID: <0_893515418@inet_out.mail.aol.com.1>
Content-type: text/plain; charset=US-ASCII

This is long, but I thought you might enjoy knowing how women's issues are doing in other church organizations. IF it gets too long for you, scroll to the end and read Jim's quote. They're always so inspiring.

Love, Tom

--part0_893515418_boundary
Content-ID: <0_893515418@inet_out.mail.aol.com.2>
Content-type: message/rfc822
Content-transfer-encoding: 7bit
Content-disposition: inline

Return-Path: <JIM_OXYER.parti@ecunet.org>
Received: from relay25.mx.aol.com (relay25.mail.aol.com [172.31.109.25])
by

air16.mx.aol.com (v42.4) with SMTP; Fri, 24 Apr 1998 13:50:59

-0400

Received: from mail.unidial.com (unidial.com [206.112.0.9])
by relay25.mx.aol.com (8.8.5/8.8.5/AOL-4.0.0)
with ESMTTP id NAA25349 for <SAGIITON@aol.com>;
Fri, 24 Apr 1998 13:50:58 -0400 (EDT)

Received: from pcusa01.ecunet.org (outbound.ecunet.org [206.115.64.10])
by mail.unidial.com (8.8.7/ntr.net 3.0.0) with SMTP id RAA06718
for <SAGIITON@aol.com>; Fri, 24 Apr 1998 17:50:58 GMT

Sender: JIM_OXYER.parti@ecunet.org
Date: Fri, 24 Apr 1998 13:46:13 -0400 (EDT)
To: SAGIITON@aol.com
From: JIM_OXYER.parti@ecunet.org (JIM OXYER)
Message-ID: <9804241346.aa19335@pcusa01.ecunet.org>
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-type: text/plain; charset=US-ASCII
Content-transfer-encoding: 7bit

To: SAGIITON@AOL.COM

Title: "Re-Imagining Revival"
22-April-1998
98142

"Re-Imagining Revival" Marks The End of
"The Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity With Women"

by Alexa Smith

SAINT PAUL Minn -It was the spirituality that he read between the lines

members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who signed up for the "Re-Imagining Revival" here last weekend. It was the largest denominational group for a reunionlike gathering of the first event's feminist theologians and liturgists, whose names became famous, or infamous, depending on one's perspective, in the fury that followed the 1993 conference. The first Re-Imagining conference caused some Presbyterian and Methodist congregations to threaten to withhold mission dollars or quit the denomination, and brought about the firing of PC(USA) staff member Mary Ann Lundy, who was one of the conference planners.

Conceived to mark the midpoint of the World Council of Churches' "Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, 1988-1998," the first Re-Imagining conference actually marked much more. It revealed how firmly mainline conservatives were drawing their lines and how stunned progressives were by the level of organized outrage. Since then, control has been tightened on church officers and staff and there is, particularly among Presbyterians, more insistence on orthodoxy in church policy and doctrine.

But Re-Imaginers - diffusely spread in what they call the grass roots - insist that, while not exactly orthodox, they are within the church's tradition when they draw on feminist thinkers to reinterpret Christian symbols and delve into doctrine to find ways to express the feminine experience of the holy. However, they rely less and less on church institutions for support, financial or otherwise.

"There's a hunger, quite frankly, for a different kind of church that really does meet [these women and men] on a profound spiritual level and links that with a commitment to justice," said Jean Audrey Powers, a former United Methodist Church ecumenical officer and a member of the tiny Minneapolis Re-Imagining Community, describing the approximately 900 people who signed up for the "revival." "They want it in their churches. But they find it in this community.

"And here they're not afraid to say they're feminist. [In many churches,] justice is not necessarily popular, feminism is not claimed and the responses to the spiritual needs are what we've always known," said Powers, adding that United Methodists made up the second-largest group in attendance.

As first-timer Martin put it: "Christian theology has reached a dead end. It's not been going anywhere since Tillich ... except [for work] by women. ... The organized structures are not designed for reform, for change, but to conserve the past and to minimize change.

"And," he said, "they're patriarchal to the core."

The Presbyterian speakers

Trying to shed patriarchy's hold on religious imagery and language is what turned "Re-Imagining" into the media spectacle that it became five years ago - with a now entrenched milk-and-honey ritual (recapturing a liturgical text of the early church) and a blessing for each speaker in the name of Sophia (scripture's personification of wisdom). But one returning speaker, Presbyterian Delores Williams of Union Theological Seminary in New York, said that "unedited, uncensored women-talk" is another way to do so

making room for feelings and mysteries, secrets and tears. But she warned that such talk leads women to realize that just as the slaves had to reimagine Christianity, the religion of their masters, women "ain't got the same religion" their slave masters had.

Williams dared her listeners to reimagine symbols within the Christian tradition on the basis of their experience of God, seeking life-giving, community-building symbols such as loaves and fish, which do not put salvific emphasis on death.

"The point I am trying to make here is not that we throw out the cross

... not that we throw out crucifixion," said Williams, reminding listeners of the firestorm caused by her comments five years ago criticizing the classical formulation of sacrificial atonement, "we reinterpret it."

"We reinterpret it with things we've got in the tradition," she told the Presbyterian News Service, saying that she sees the cross as a crime, a representation of the violence done to those daring to bring a "beautiful vision" - like that of Jesus - up against the world's oppressive structures.

She warned that old language and old images do not cross over new gulfs and that women who want to cross over will have to do so without the protection, especially the financial protection, of men. "That's not new, right?" Williams said. "You know that."

Lundy - now deputy general secretary of the World Council of Churches - told the gathering that women in all parts of the world are, like the Re-Imaginers, staying in their churches, but gathering often in ecumenical groups to nourish their faith with liturgy and theological study.

"I like to think of these as groups very much like the early church - house churches," she said, adding that Voices of Sophia took that role in Presbyterian circles when the furor of the first conference hit and when, as she put it, "we were all made voiceless by the scared religious structures."

Insisting that women need to tell of their own experience - and to be angry when the churches that taught its girls about justice and peace and nurtured them as leaders back down - Lundy was firm that staying angry means living with "paralyzing bitterness" and that letting it go is the

only way to get on with the work that the Decade was conceived to do and did, to get on with asking the hard questions of the faith and rolling away the stones that block women's progress. She cited ordination for women in Korea, the economic development of women in India and the greater awareness of women's work in Togo and Pakistan as some of the Decade's successes.

"We have a right," said Lundy, "to call the churches to accountability for their lack of responsibility in doing honest theology, for keeping secret from its members the biblical scholarship that would enable all the laity to ask the hard questions that Re-Imagining asked about the place of women ... about power and about authority - and what the Bible does and does not say about the difficult issues of our day.

"Our churches and clergy are lazy," she said. "They avoid doing the hard work of empowering the people in the pews [with] the tools to reimagine for themselves. Instead they encourage them to live with a safe, numbing faith that sits fat and self-satisfied."

But, Lundy concluded, despite the turmoil the first Re-Imaginings endured, Sophia is now being studied by Presbyterians, Delores Williams' books are being read and [Re-Imagining theologian] Rita Nakashima Brock is a late-night television presence.

"Yesterday's heresies," she said, "are tomorrow's 'Book of Order.'"

New York Union Theological Seminary ethicist Beverly Harrison attributed much of the fear in the society, in politics and within denominations to what she called the family-values nomenclature of the "right" that espouses hate - a victim-blaming agenda that she said longs to "kill the queers," hates the women who have abortions and tries to make feminism "a dirty word."

"And why are we on the hit list of the Christian right?" she asked her listeners, naming "The Presbyterian Layman" and the Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD) as having employed people full-time to discredit the conference's theological work.

"We didn't take ourselves seriously enough," she said. "The right takes us seriously and rightly so, and with their resources they have won a great deal in this society."

After insisting that her listeners practice a feminist ethic of community-building and justice-seeking, Harrison told the Presbyterian News Service that the Christian right has "largely succeeded" in silencing the voice of the great middle of society by destroying their belief in community-building kinds of politics.

"In spite of that, there's an amazing amount of resistance going on," she said. "And there's some hope in it - but not from the denominational structures."

The Presbyterian role

More than 140 conference attendees came to the Voices of Sophia breakfast midway through the conference, some voicing distress that denominational staff were prohibited from using continuing education money or time to attend the Re-Imagining conference. That decision by interim General Assembly Council executive director the Rev. Frank Diaz was made months ago and was described by Diaz as being for "the good of the church ... to not have to go through another Re-Imagining situation."

Since the uproar over the use of \$66,000 in Bicentennial Fund monies for scholarships to the first conference, no PC(USA) dollars have been used in any subsequent "Re-Imagining" conference, though smaller-scale events have been held each year in Minneapolis since 1993. Diaz' decision won the approval of Parker Williamson, editor of "The Presbyterian Layman," which led the attack on the first conference and has worked for tighter restrictions on church officers since then.

"I'm delighted," he said, "there's no denominational money and no endorsement. That's an improvement."

Only the United Church of Christ contributed to the most recent event.

A \$2,500 grant underwrote the participation of South African ecumenist Brigalia Bam, according to Lois Powell, executive director of the UCC's Coordinating Center for Women.

Registration fees covered the costs of the conference, though \$20,000 in scholarship money was made available to participants, including a group of students from Agnes Scott College, a Presbyterian-related school in Decatur, Ga.

Yale Divinity School professor the Rev. Letty Russell interprets denominational withdrawal this way: Mainline denominations - like the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) - are "trying to avoid this issue," she said, meaning "Re-Imagining." "They want it to be as though it didn't happen. They don't want it to come up again," Russell said, citing increasing pressure conservatives have applied within denominations.

"But the most important thing [for participants here]," Russell said, referring to the spirituality and the community-building, "is to realize that you're not crazy and you're not alone. There are many women of faith who want to continue to be part of a Christian community and believe it is important for the tradition to continue to be lived out, to be transformed ... and for it to be a tradition that welcomes all people," she added, after participating in a call within the conference for solidarity with lesbians and gays with Presbyterian activist the Rev. Jane Spahr.

"It is possible to be a person of faith and to celebrate that with joy," said Russell, "to still believe that God cares about all people whose voices and realities are not heard in [normal] church liturgy and theology."

That commitment is what keeps Presbyterian Sally Hill, the Minneapolis clergywoman who chaired the local committee for the first conference, involved in ongoing "Re-Imagining" events. But she's puzzled by ongoing attention of "conservative factions" to "Re-Imagining" since it does not rely much on the mainline - just for the "hungry" people, as Hill says, who come seeking spiritual nourishment.

"We won't leave," she said of Re-Imaginiers' denominational affiliations, even if institutional backing isn't there. "We care too much."

There were nine conference speakers and one "revival" preacher. Subjects ranged from Mariology to the incarnation.

12:12 24.04.1998 Louisville, Kentucky
Jim Oxyer

"Take your partner by the hand. He's a woman, she's a man. What's so hard to understand? Take your partner by the hand." — Robbie Robertson

—part0_893515418_boundary—

'The Pleasure of Her Text,

**Feminist Readings of
Biblical & Historical Texts**

Edited by
Alice Bach

**Trinity Press International
Philadelphia**

Samford University Library



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026 with funding from
CLIR DHC Grant 2026-2028

<https://archive.org/details/2174.10.33>

Protestant Feminists and the Bible: On the Horns of a Dilemma

MARY ANN TOLBERT
Vanderbilt University Divinity School

FOR MANY WOMEN the freedom to proclaim their own experience in the world and their own vision of the world as authoritative and legitimate, rather than marginal and deviant as patriarchy would have it, is the profoundly liberating dynamic of the feminist movement. However, for many feminists, and especially for many Jewish and Christian feminists, their own experience is often painfully split within itself because, to echo Elaine Showalter's words,¹ we are both the daughters of the male tradition, of Abraham and the patriarchs, of Jesus, Paul, and the Church Fathers, of our male ministers and rabbis, professors and dissertation advisors, and at the same time sisters together in a new consciousness, which rejects the submissive, victimized roles Western society, formed and molded by these two great religious traditions, has forced us, and generations of our foremothers and sisters, to play. Consciousness of the mutilation of minds, spirits, and bodies perpetrated for centuries on women by patriarchal misogyny demands not only our rage but also our absolute commitment to oppose and dismantle all the societal structures still supporting that misogyny. We cannot will away this new consciousness no matter how much discomfort it sometimes causes in our personal and professional lives. We can no longer teach or preach male history, androcentric ethics, or patriarchal biblical interpretations as though they were universals; we can no longer pledge unquestioning allegiance to existing religious hierarchies and institutions as though they actually served the whole family of Mother God rather than mainly the brethren. We cannot forget what we as

feminists now know, any more than we can deny the degree to which patriarchal patterns continue to shape our lives and careers, either through our acceptance of them or through our rebellion against them.

This split within our experience, being both the heirs and the victims of patriarchy, is nowhere more apparent than in many women's struggles to come to terms with the religious traditions in which they were born, raised, or formed. Short of throwing out whole traditions and developing entirely new religious systems, an option I believe all feminists must leave open, is it possible for feminists to extract the gold, silver, and clothing out of their religious lands of slavery without also keeping the manacles and chains, just as the children of Israel were successful in doing with Egypt (Exod 12:35-36)? In this essay I wish to explore that question specifically in relation to the struggles of women in one particular strand of the Christian tradition: Protestantism. I have chosen this group not only because it is the one I know best, having been myself raised in a Protestant denomination and having taught for the past nine years in a non-denominational, primarily Protestant divinity school but also because I believe that Protestant feminists encounter special problems related to their tradition that have not been analyzed sufficiently for their similarities and differences with feminists from other Christian and Jewish traditions to become clear, and such clarity may let us understand each other better and thus help each other more. This essay is only as an initial attempt at assessing these issues and, hence, in no way pretends to be a final or full explication.

The specific experience which inaugurated my thinking on this subject was the observation that many of my Protestant women students find difficulty in appropriating much current feminist biblical research and proposals for Women-Church or the *ekklesia* of women.² They certainly comprehend the issues and are indeed eager to learn of and investigate the fuller, more central role of women in early Christian history, as feminist reconstructions are uncovering it. The difficulty arises, however, in drawing from such studies a definite *praxis* for them. There appears, in other words, to be some lack of fit between these feminist writings and their own concrete experiences. Since feminism, like all liberation movements, should always result in *praxis*, for the point is to *change the world*, not simply add to our knowledge about it, this difficulty in appropriation is in need of analysis and explanation.

In conversations, both formal and informal, with groups of students over the last two years, three general characteristics of the Protestant

tradition consistently surface as barriers for many women in appropriating a considerable amount of recent feminist research. I would like to list and explain the problems caused by each characteristic briefly and then devote the remainder of this essay to a fuller exploration of the first, the role of scripture in Protestantism.

Problems in the Protestant Tradition

From the time of Martin Luther's defense before the Diet of Worms in 1521, the first principle guiding the Protestant Reformation and the various groups growing out of it was the conviction of *sola scriptura*: "Scripture alone is the true over-lord and master of all writings and doctrines on earth."³ Although feminists cannot help but notice the patriarchal language by which Luther articulated this doctrine, the primacy granted to scripture and its authority over all human ideas, structures, decisions, and theologies continues to be one of the most potent influences in the religious formation of anyone raised in the Protestant tradition. While I intend to return to this principle and its ramifications for feminists later, even on a simple reading of it the reason why some Protestant feminists have difficulty dispensing with the text of scripture in favor of historical reconstructions becomes more evident.

The second characteristic of modern Protestantism that poses major problems for feminists is its striking diversity. One cannot speak of a Protestant view or position on anything; rather one encounters many views. Even the various denominations tend often to be split into several factions, so that, for example, one cannot talk about *the* Lutheran position but must say the Missouri Synod Lutheran position. This diversity is found not only in dogma and tradition but also in liturgy, church organization, and denominational structure. Such pervasive diversity tends to isolate Protestant feminists from each other, and women's isolation from other women has always been one of the best weapons of patriarchal oppression: divide and conquer. Protestant women attempting to worship together, for instance, must begin by deciding whose order of worship to follow, whose hymnal to use, and whose liturgy to enact, so that our celebrations of sisterhood end up emphasizing our lives of separation. The actual number of feminists throughout all the Protestant denominations would prove, I believe, to be a substantial and highly influential body, but by dividing that body into separate groups of Methodist women, Presbyterian women, Disciples women,

equals with lay women in church groups or even in support groups difficult. Between denominational divisions and clergy-laity divisions, Protestant feminists are thoroughly isolated and robbed of effective power bases.

The third characteristic of Protestantism that thwarts feminists efforts is its emphasis on the individual rather than the community. In the early years of the Puritan settlement in New England, the right to vote was based on church membership, and church membership could only be won by each individual (male) being able to give a credible account of his personal experience of grace.⁶ Founded on the "inner-worldly asceticism" of the Reformation and refined by the Calvinistic doctrine of the unique worldly "calling" fashioned by God for each person,⁷ a staunch individualism occupies the center of the historic Protestant experience. The critical issue for salvation is the relation of each individual to God, not participation in certain groups or performance of certain rituals, although both of these latter actions have their places. It is this stress on the state of the individual soul that has encouraged the importance of conversion and revivalism in Protestantism. Moreover, this individual emphasis tends to foster a more private or personal vision of the good rather than a public or social one.⁸ Yet, for feminists it is vital to recognize the systemic nature of patriarchal oppression, rather than being totally occupied with its local and private manifestations. Asserting that none of us are liberated until all of us are liberated is not exaggerated rhetoric but the realization of the pervasive, systemic structure of oppression.

I am not saying that Protestant feminists tend to be self-centered and concerned only with their own pain, whereas non-Protestants are universalistic in their aims. It is just that the heavy value placed on the individual in Protestantism may encourage a shorter vision, focused on more immediate and limited objectives, like, for example, ordination or the election of a woman bishop, or on *ad hoc* responses to blatant instances of discrimination. Such short-term goals are obviously important, but they cannot substitute for a more broadly sustained social and systemic critique of oppression in all its various forms. African-American Protestant women have been much less distracted by this individual bias than their European-American sisters, perhaps because their double oppression, both racial and sexual, forces a broader assessment of the causes and structures of oppression in Western society and perhaps also because the social function of the Black Church in a segregated society and its roots in African tribal culture have served to mitigate the privatizing influence of Protestant individualism. Greater conversation between

African-American and European-American Protestant women might be one way of keeping the longer-range issues of oppression more clearly in view.

Since in the traditional Protestant formulation each individual was to work at her or his specific divine "calling" in the world as a holy person, separate orders of religious men and women were discouraged. The model of a women's community, allowing greater independence and communication among women than society at large generally permitted, was essentially lost to Protestant women by the Reformation.⁹ Instead, woman's divine "calling" in the world as wife and mother was emphasized. Unlike Catholic women, Protestant women have had little opportunity or encouragement to define their religious identity in relation to other women or even to see that model as a possibility, for orders of Protestant nuns are rare. The religious identity of most Protestant women is defined primarily in relation to the family unit. Hence, Protestant individualism has acted also to stress Protestant familialism: the family as the focus of worship and Christian formation (as, for example, in "The family that prays together, stays together").

This familial emphasis has been so inculcated in many Protestant women that attempts to organize women-only retreats, worship services, or even meetings raises conflicting emotions in people otherwise committed to feminist issues. To exclude husbands, brothers, and sons even from those essential events required for women to raise their own level of consciousness, to learn how to support each other, or to begin to bond together to overcome generations of isolation seems to some a violation of true Christian love and discipleship. However, these actions are seen as violations mainly because for most Protestants the family has been made the ideal focus of one's religious identity. To the degree that ideas of Women-Church or the *ekklēsia* of women inevitably demand some amount of separatism, Protestant women often find them difficult to harmonize with their own tradition.

While each of these three characteristics of Protestantism has serious implications for the future of Protestant feminists, their combined weight may explain why the most important and compelling formulations of a feminist vision for contemporary Christianity have come by and large from the Catholic community.¹⁰ I in no way mean to denigrate the important contributions of some Protestant feminist theologians and biblical scholars,¹¹ but any fair appraisal of the scene would have to acknowledge the wider role of women formed by the Catholic tradition. If Protestantism is to be challenged and changed

by feminism or, to put it another way, if Protestant feminists are to find some means of remaining in their tradition, the many problems raised by the role of scripture, Protestant diversity, and individualism must be addressed in a serious and sustained fashion. As a first step in that broader discussion, I would like to examine the role of scripture in Protestantism and delineate possible feminist responses to it.

Sola Scriptura

Deeming it the sole authority in all matters religious, the early Protestant reformers used scripture to purge what they viewed to be a decadent and decayed Church. Scripture liberated them from the teaching of the Church Fathers and from the ecclesiastical structures which had developed over 1,500 years of Church life. Since according to Luther not even the revelations of angels could supercede scripture,¹² all authority was vested in the Word of God, including the authority to interpret itself. Thus, elaborate allegorical readings were to be rejected, and the task of minutely studying scripture in order to establish its own meanings was begun, a task upon which we are still engaged almost 500 years later.¹³ For Protestants, the central and unavoidable problematic posed by the role of scripture is its *authority*, but exactly what that authority entails varies from denomination to denomination and indeed is often a hotly contested issue within denominations.¹⁴ So, rather than beginning with theoretical debates over authority, an argument which I will eventually have to enter, I wish to begin with the simpler question of *functions*: how does scripture function in Protestantism?

Although within the diversity of Protestantism generalizations are somewhat suspect, it seems justifiable to say that most Protestant worship centers on scripture: in public ceremonies, scripture readings and sermons based on scripture (though occasionally the connection between the scripture and the sermon may be rather tenuous) form the heart of the service with other liturgical elements (prayers, music, or eucharist) sharing greater or lesser amounts of attention; in private devotionals, scripture reading and prayer are the essentials. Scripture, then, for Protestants becomes the primary medium of communion with God; if Catholics commune with God mainly through participation in the sacraments, and especially the mass, Protestants commune with God through scripture. Neill Hamilton's assessment of scripture is representative of the Protestant perspective: "God,

who is the Father of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for a certainty spoke in these writings, and this same God continues to speak through their witness. The New Testament is where to go to listen for the 'call.'"¹⁵ The crucial images have to do with "call," "speak," and "listen." For Protestants, the Bible is not simply a source of *knowledge* about God or the early Christians or the Hebrew people; it is, rather, a source for *experiencing, hearing, God or God-in-Jesus* in each present moment of life.

Nevertheless, Protestant feminists along with their Roman Catholic and Jewish sisters must also acknowledge that this same Bible is often misogynistic and anti-Semitic, thoroughly androcentric and patriarchal, and seeped in ancient Near Eastern and Hellenistic mythology.¹⁶ Indeed, along with many of the so-called "classics" of Western literature, the Bible continues to exercise over women, and other oppressed groups like homosexuals, a form of "textual harassment,"¹⁷ appropriating social discrimination into textual structures and categories. To excuse the Bible, or other "great" literature, for these acts of textual violence on the grounds that they are simply reflecting the social ethos of earlier cultures is either to underestimate the continuing power of these alienating images or to approve tacitly the existence of oppression in times past just because they are past.¹⁸ Jewish and Christian feminists, and especially Protestant feminists whose religious formation has been so permeated by scripture, are thus faced with a difficult dilemma: honesty and survival as whole human beings requires that we point out and denounce the pervasive patriarchal hierarchies of oppression, both social and sexual, that populate the Bible, and yet at the same time we must also acknowledge the degree to which we have been shaped and continue to be nourished by these same writings. How are we, then, to understand "the same Bible as enslaver and liberator"?¹⁹

Feminist Responses

At present the predominant feminist scholarly response to biblical androcentrism is to use the text, not as an authority in and of itself, but as a source for reconstructing the history of women in early Christianity or Judaism.²⁰ This approach, which understands the Bible as prototype rather than archetype,²¹ has many advantages: it employs a well-recognized mode of analysis, the historical-critical method, with appropriate feminist modifications;²² it frees feminists from the chains of extant textual formulations by judicious appeal to

the disciplined exercise of the "historical imagination"; it reveals the androcentric biases of most male reconstructions of early Christianity or Judaism by proving that the available evidence does not inevitably lead to the conclusion of women's marginality; it empowers a new vision of an egalitarian community by uncovering the leadership roles and full participation of women in the historical development of early Christianity and Judaism; and it unequivocally asserts the damaging patriarchal tone of scripture as a whole and thus allows women to reject its "textual harassment" and shift the locus of revelation from text to history and from ecclesial authority to women's community. Moreover, influenced by the Protestant principle of returning to the purer origins as a corrective for current degeneration, historical reconstructions of early Christianity or the historical Jesus have always sprung from overt, or more often covert, reforming aims.²³ Feminist reconstructions are indeed no more of an advocacy stance than other reconstructions; they are simply more honest and open about their advocacy than white, male reconstructions have tended to be.

Along with these definite advantages, the feminist response of historical reconstruction has, as does any well-defined perspective, a number of limitations. All historical reconstructions face the difficulty of establishing which point in the historical origins ranks as the purest and thus possesses the authority to stand in judgment over later degeneration. For Luther, the New Testament period as a whole held that authority,²⁴ but for later historical critics considerably narrower slices of that period are demonstrably purer, be they Paul's missionary activity, the historical Jesus' *ipsissima verba*, or the egalitarian movement called forth by Jesus. These contending points of historical authority are often related—not surprisingly—to the advocacy stances that generated the reconstruction in the first place and have perhaps served to return some of the flexibility of interpretation to scripture that was lost when the historical consciousness of the Enlightenment dethroned allegorical interpretation. However, if one hopes that by moving from ancient androcentric texts to historical reconstructions one has escaped patriarchal biases or reduced the polyvalent text to the objective, unitary truth of history, one is greatly mistaken: reconstructions are just as subject to advocacy and just as polysemous as any text has been.

More seriously, rooting authoritative revelation in a particular historical moment suggests that those groups not participating in that moment are somehow less worthy than those who do. Just such an assumption has undergirded the second-class status assigned to

women by Christian patriarchy, for, so one argument goes, since Jesus chose twelve men as his disciples, women should not now be ordained as priests or ministers. While feminist reconstructions have done much to explode the patriarchal myth of women's marginality in early Christianity, the underlying assumption that historical participation is a necessary prerequisite for full status in the present has not really been challenged. Hence, other groups who cannot reconstruct their historical participation (as, for example, certain racial groups, homosexuals, handicapped people,²⁵ etc.) still face disenfranchisement. Unless male and female are seen to be the most basic categories of existence and thus, establishing the presence of both in the formative history of Judaism or Christianity empowers all people of whatever other identity groups, retaining the importance of historical participation will inevitably continue to relegate some people to marginal status.

Finally, from the perspective of Protestant feminists, reconstructions of the leadership roles of women in early Christianity, although adding vital elements to our formerly solely patriarchal picture of early Christianity, does not address the pressing question of how to work with biblical texts as they stand, considering their central function in Protestant worship and religious formation. Furthermore, in excavating the text for history, reconstructions by-pass, and consequently fail to explain, the curious dynamic experienced even by many feminists: reading admittedly androcentric, occasionally misogynous, texts can still fill women with the passion for and vision of liberation. How is it that texts that negate the experience of women and define them as "other" are also texts that women continue to wish to claim as their own—and not out of ignorance but out of the realization that they have actually experienced these "negative" texts as liberating? Raising this last point suggests another direction for a feminist response to scripture, not as a substitute for historical reconstruction but as an additional alternative to it: the exploration of gender in relation to the reading of texts.

Read to here; whole article will be available

Gender and Reading at Elena's!

Various analyses of what is involved in the whole process of reading have dominated the debates in literary-critical circles during the last decade as interest in so-called "audience-oriented" or "reader-response" criticism has grown.²⁶ Feminist literary criticism, beginning in this country in the early 1970's with Kate Millett's *Sexual*

Politics, has now entered those debates by raising the question of the relation of gender to reading. Although the "canon" of literature faced by feminist literary critics is rather more malleable than the one faced by feminist biblical critics, many of the same issues (e.g., the invisibility of women writers, misogynous characterization, and thoroughly androcentric texts) arise in both. Indeed, the stages through which feminist literary criticism has developed since the early 1970's reveal a striking correspondence to feminist biblical interpretation. Elaine Showalter suggests that three stages in the progression of feminist literary criticism can be perceived:²⁷ the first stage "concentrated on exposing the misogyny of literary practice"²⁸ both in its negative, stereotypical image of women and in its assumption of women's lesser status as writers and critics. From Elizabeth Cady Stanton's *Woman's Bible* to Mary Daly's *The Church and the Second Sex* to collections of essays on the plight of women throughout church history, like Rosemary Radford Ruether's *Religion and Sexism* to analyses of the textual violence against women in the Bible, like Phyllis Trible's *Texts of Terror*, one of the earliest and continuing tasks of feminists in religion has been to document the overwhelming misogyny of Western religious traditions.

For feminist literary criticism the second phase "was the discovery that women writers had a literature of their own, whose historical and thematic coherence, as well as artistic importance, had been obscured by . . . patriarchal values. . . ."²⁹ The recovery of the tradition of women as writers was and remains one of the most important contributions of feminist literary critics. This reconstruction of women's literary tradition parallels the discovery and reconstruction of women's leadership roles in the birth and development of Judaism and Christianity, the current predominant feminist response to religious patriarchy. For many literary critics, establishing the roots and tradition of female literature remains the most vital contribution feminist scholars can make to the battle against patriarchy. For others, however, although such reconstituting of the literary universe must be pursued as far as possible, the end result will still be unsatisfying because patriarchal values and institutions not only ignored the women who did write, they actually prevented many talented women from writing at all. Similarly, after every fleeting hint in scripture of the historical role of women in biblical times has been tracked down and every story involving women characters has been explicated, the sum total will still be only one coin in ten,³⁰ the other nine manifesting the androcentric economy. Patriarchy and misogyny are not simply textual entities; they were and are cultural, social

'The Pleasure of Her Text,

**Feminist Readings of
Biblical & Historical Texts**

Edited by
Alice Bach

**Trinity Press International
Philadelphia**

Samford University Library

Comics E2
Deaths E3

RELIGION

SATURDAY

E

SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

Right or self-righteous?

Church's leaders say amendment reflects Scriptures

By Tom Kiskien

Scripps Howard News Service

Every team needs a leader. It's the coach for a baseball squad, a chief executive for a corporation, a principal for a school.

And in a family, it's the husband. Or so says Cynthia Fahy of Thousand Oaks, Calif., a free-lance writer, born-again Christian and wife of a member of the Promise Keepers men's group. She agrees with Southern Baptist Convention members who infuriated legions of women earlier this spring by stating wives should graciously submit to their husbands' Bible-inspired leadership.

With about 16 million members from 41,000 churches, the Southern Baptist Convention is the nation's largest Protestant denomination, so it caught people's attention when church leaders voted a few weeks ago to amend their official document of belief to include guidance for spouses.

The husband, they said, is responsible for providing and protecting. A wife is a man's equal but "has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation."

It's straight from the Bible, say the Southern Baptists.

Archaic, said two working women in Thousand Oaks. An ill-conceived attempt to repress, said a women's studies professor in Santa Barbara, Calif. Flat-out wrong, according to a Cerritos woman taking a break from a business meeting in Camarillo, Calif.

But members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints say the wife's primary role is to nurture the family. Pope John Paul II has said it's preferable for women to focus on the home. Some Orthodox Jews espouse similar views.

Speakers at Promise Keepers conventions, which have attracted thousands of conservative Christians, tell men it's their job to be equal partners but also to be the head of the household.

And many women agree. The roiling over gender roles boils down to your definition of "submit," Fahy said. Critics see it as being subservient, but they just don't get it, she said.

She said graciously submitting to a husband's servant leadership, as the Southern Baptist amendment is worded, means working as a team and discussing issues together.

If they disagree, as the Fahys did 13 years ago over whether to move from Santa Barbara to Thousand Oaks, it's the husband's job to make a prayerful decision that's best not just for him but for the family.



Scripps Howard News Service

Dan Nelson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Camarillo, Calif., cast his vote in favor of the Southern Baptist family role amendment. His wife, Janice, says she approves of the

amendment, which has many feminists upset. She says she believes God 'honors' her husband's decisions and that being submissive takes pressure off her.



Scripps Howard News Service

Dan Nelson consults his wife, Janice, on all major family decisions, but the final say is his.

"Two years after we moved, I had to turn to my husband and say, 'I'm sorry for putting up a roadblock,'" Fahy said. "In any good team, in any viable workplace, there's someone with whom the buck stops."

In Rabbi Michele Paskow's vocabulary, "submit" means to give in.

Paskow is the leader of a Reform congregation in Simi Valley, Calif., and is married to Jeff Cohen, cantor at a Conservative Thousand Oaks temple. She calls them partners. If he's the majority partner on one issue, then she's got the power on the next.

"I don't think it can ever be 50-50, but I see him as an equal and he sees me as an equal," she said. "If you

asked him if I'm submissive, I don't think he would say yes."

Cohen laughs at the question and answers with one word: "No."

Some women, however, are looking for a role that is more June Cleaver than Hillary Rodham Clinton.

That also brings a laugh, this time from Sarah Taylor, a self-acknowledged feminist who teaches about women and religion at the University of California-Santa Barbara. And when she stopped laughing, Taylor offered several explanations for why some women may favor a more submissive role.

Southern California is a place where many men and women say the only

way to believe is by basing social values on a literal interpretation of the Bible.

Even the more conservative churches have become more restrictive as their leaders have watched liberal churches lose members, Taylor said.

Many of the congregants seem to think that the more they sacrifice, the more they will ultimately gain, she said.

Stephanie Rostohar of Camarillo is a hairstylist who is divorced and is raising an 11-year-old. She identifies herself as "not a women's-libber" and said all she has ever wanted is to be a loving wife and mother.

Feminism has succeeded only in confusing women and men about right roles, she said. As women have worked toward equality in the workplace, they've taken jobs from men and stripped them of their dignity, Rostohar said. It's no surprise that families struggle and children are neglected, she said.

"When a woman has to go out and earn a six-digit income, she's naturally going to have to put her family aside," she said.

March those kind of sentiments before other working women and you might need a flak jacket.

'I don't think it can ever be 50-50, but I see him (her husband, Jeff Cohen) as an equal and he sees me as an equal. If you asked him if I'm submissive, I don't think he would say yes.'

— Rabbi Michele Paskow

"I would go insane," said Mahogany Grajczak of Thousand Oaks, who is married and claims to "wear the pants" in her relationship.

The Southern Baptist view is so regressive that "it's from I don't even know when," she said.

It miscasts the battle for gender equality, according to Taylor: Feminism isn't about eliminating the differences between men and women, she said. It's about equal moral and legal standing.

The Southern Baptists say they didn't make this stuff up. It's from the Bible. It is God's will.

Think about it, said Rev. Ron Wilson of the First Baptist Church in Thousand Oaks. The Southern Baptist Convention's amendment says a husband should provide for his family and be so committed that he would die for them, as Christ did for his followers.

"I think the vast majority of women in the United States would say, 'Hey, that's what I'm looking for,'" Wilson said.

But Taylor said religion often is used as a way to control people. Back in the 1800s, people argued that Caucasians had the God-given authority to make decisions for black people. "They said, 'It's the white man who has the divine wisdom to make the de-

The amendment

The Southern Baptist Convention earlier this year approved the following amendment about family roles:

"God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

"The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

"Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents."

cision," Taylor said. "There's a direct parallel."

If a majority of women really wanted submissive roles, the Southern Baptists wouldn't have needed an official proclamation. It would already be reality, she said.

It's easier to talk about a wife graciously submitting to a husband's will than to live it, said David Scholer, a women-and-religion expert at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. He said for most women, the talk is just that.

Not in Rev. Dan Nelson's home. Nelson is pastor at First Baptist Church of Camarillo. He attended the Southern Baptist Convention's meeting in Salt Lake City, casting his vote for the family role amendment.

Although he consults his wife, Janice, on all major decisions, he has the final say.

Janice Nelson, who works as a registered nurse, said that's fine with her. Actually, it takes some of the pressure off.

"In major decisions, I'm not going to really pressure to have my way," she said, "because I feel like God honors his decisions."

ETHIOPIA

Church leaders say war could close holy sites

By David Gough

The Guardian

LALIBELA, Ethiopia — Ethiopian Orthodox Church officials say they fear the border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea could affect the church's income and lead to the closure of holy sites.

The Church, which traces its roots back to the fourth century, is threatened by a growing Protestant movement within Ethiopia and the land reforms of the past two decades.

Now many of the Church's priests, who depend on tourism for a large part of their income, say that a war could cause a dramatic decline in visitors, and that may force them to close some of the holiest sites.

Priests in Lalibela, in the north, say that since the confiscation of church property during the Marxist government of Mengistu Haile Mariam from 1974 to 1991, they have had to depend increasingly on tourism for their income.

Kess Moges Tesefaw is head priest of one of Lalibela's 11 churches, all of which were carved out of rocks in the 12th and 13th centuries. "We have nothing but money from tourists to support us," he said. "The local people are too poor to give, and if the tourists stop coming we will have to close the churches."

"We are completely dependent on tourists," said another of Lalibela's priests. "If the tourists stop coming, we will starve."

The Culture Ministry spokesman in Lalibela, Wodaje Desalange, said he feared that the onset of war, a significant reduction in the number of tourists and the subsequent loss of revenue for the priests might lead to an increase in thefts of religious artifacts by priests.

Last year in Lalibela a priest stole and sold a 12th-century gold cross that has never been recovered. In the city of Aksum, in the north, artifacts have gone missing from St. Mariam's Church, which is said to house the original Ark of the Covenant.

"We are worried that the war will lead people to steal again. All of the priests have large families to feed," Desalange said.

He added that in Lalibela, home to 500 priests, almost all the local people were dependent on the priests for their income.

Asked whether his ministry would be able to subsidize the priests' income in the event of a prolonged war, he said, "The government simply does not have enough money."

— Scripps Howard News Service

RELIGION CALENDAR

Today
■ Church carnival, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., New Hope Baptist Church, 1740 Cleburn Ave. Southwest; 987-1138

Sunday
■ Buddhist practitioner, 10:30 a.m., Unitarian Church of Birmingham, 2365 Cahaba Road; 879-5150
■ Women's Day celebration, Lily Baptist Church, 2293 Treadwell Road, Brummitt Heights; 841-7902 or 925-3722
■ Annual Deacon/Deaconess/Trustees Day, 11 a.m. and 3 p.m., Pilgrim Rest Primitive Baptist Church, 4314 Letson St., Brighton; 424-9030
■ Worship service, 8:45 and 11 a.m., Bluff Park United Methodist Church, 733 Valley St.; 822-0910 or 822-5815
■ Homecoming, 10:50 a.m., Bernay Points Baptist Church, 2250 Blue Ridge Blvd., Hoover; 979-5151
■ Homecoming, noon, covered dish lunch, First Baptist Shady Grove

Adamsville, 1280 Union Grove Road; 674-9415
■ Sunday Night Alive, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, 2017 Columbiana Road; 822-1670

Monday
■ Revival, 6:30 p.m., through Friday, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, 709 12th St. North, Bessemer; 428-4235

Thursday
■ Adventures in Learning, 10 a.m., Shepherd's Center West, 4616 Terrace R, lunch \$3.50; 925-0451

Friday
■ Annual Great Garage Sale, 8 a.m., Friday and Saturday, Vestavia Hills United Methodist Church, 2061 Kentucky Ave.; 822-9631

Please send notice of your church event to Howard Broad, Box 2553, Birmingham, Ala. 35202, or fax to Howard Broad, 325-2410.

You Are Invited To Attend STUDIES IN THE BIBLE

Sermons Taught By

PETE MCKEE

Aug. 9-14; Sunday Services 10:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. With a singing at 3 p.m., Monday through Friday 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

WESTWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST
2241 FORESTDALE BLVD.

adding it all up

$$2+2=4$$

Two new Bible study hours and two worship services provide four opportunities to build lasting relationships, discover life-changing Bible study, and encounter God through meaningful worship.



1114 Oxmoor Road • Birmingham, Alabama 35209 • Church Office 871-7324 • Prayer Line 879-2254

making one of two

Nearly/Newly Wed Bible study

You've chosen the date, the dress, the china and the florist—now choose to build your life together on the truths that last forever. Join us for Together for Life, a Bible study for couples engaged through first year of marriage, on Sunday mornings at 8:15 or 9:30 a.m., beginning August 23. You'll discover how only God can add it all up and make one life out of two.

the choice is yours

New Sunday Morning Schedule Beginning August 23

Early Bible Study 8:15 a.m.
Early Worship Service 9:30 a.m.
Late Bible Study 9:30 a.m.
Late Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

CATHY

THE AROMA-THERAPY CLASS ISN'T FOR AN HOUR. IT'S A PERFECT TIME FOR A NAP!

A NAP? ARE YOU KIDDING?

I NEED SOMETHING TO READ... TO WRITE... TO STUDY... TO ORGANIZE...

...THERE! NOW I CAN TAKE A NAP!

I CAN'T RELAX UNLESS I'M SURROUNDED BY THINGS I'M NOT GOING TO DO.

TO ORDER THE CATHY COLLECTION 'ABS OF STEEL, BUNS OF CINNAMON' CALL (800) 642-6480 AND MENTION THE BIRMINGHAM POST-HERALD. \$9.95 PLUS \$2 SHIPPING.

ARLO 'N' JANIS

WHEN KIDS TODAY HEAR, DA DA DUM, DA DA DUM, DA DA DUM DUM DUM...

DA DA DUM, DA DA DUM, DA DA DUM DUM DUM, DA DA DUM, DA DA DUM, DA DA DUM DUM DUM...

DA DA DUM DUM DUM, DA DA DUM, DA DA DUM DUM DUM!!

THEY DON'T THINK OF THE LONE RANGER!

ARLONJANIS@aol.com

www.comiczone.com

PEANUTS

MY PUTTER WAS RIGHT HERE... WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?

I THINK IT CRAWLED AWAY...

8-8

SCHEIDT

GEECH

DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT THAT GUY IS COMING ON TO ME!

WHAT GUY?

I TOLD YOU NOT TO LOOK!

I COULDN'T HELP IT, MY CURIOSITY GOT THE BEST OF ME.

WELL, IT'S TOO LATE NOW, YOU SCARED HIM OFF!

DARN, I'VE NEVER SEEN A GUY COME ON TO YOU BEFORE.

8-8

www.comiczone.com

FOX TROT

I'VE GOT TO START CHARGING THIS MUCH FOR THE DIX TO GO UP LONGER.

8-8

FUNKY WINNERBEAN

YOU GUYS PLAYED ONE HECK OF A GAME TONIGHT... SO ENJOY YOUR CELEBRATION!

WHO WANTS MORE OCTOPUS?

I LIKED IT BETTER WHEN WE CELEBRATED AT THE DAIRY DIPPER!

8-8

CURTIS

MOM, YOU'VE GOTTA DO SOMETHING ABOUT BARRY AND HIS CAMERA! HE'S DRIVING ME CRAZY!!

BUT MOM, HE'S MAKING MY LIFE A NIGHTMARE!! HE FOLLOWED ME, POPPING OUT OF NO WHERE TO TAKE MY PICTURE! HE-HE'S BECOMING THE SHUDDER! PAPA-RAZZI!!

WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE HIM IF HE WANTS TO BE A PHOTOGRAPHER, CURTIS

8-8

SHERMAN'S LAGOON

HOME AT LAST!

LOOK! IT'S HAWTHORNE'S SPACESHIP! HE'S RE-ENTERING THE ATMOSPHERE.

8-8

B.C.

MEN ARE SUCH AN ANNOYANCE...

BUT THEN, MAYBE I'M JUST TOO CUTE FOR MY OWN GOOD.

I'D BE HAPPY TO ALTER THAT LAST PART FOR YOU.

8-8

FRANK & ERNEST

MATERNITY

NOW WHAT?

8-8

THE BORN LOSER

WHY DO YOU WHINE SO EVERY TIME YOU GET A LEG WAX?

AFTER ALL, HOW BAD COULD THAT HURT?

TRY PUTTING A STRIP OF DUCT TAPE UNDER YOUR ARM, THEN RIP IT OFF!

8-8

ANN LANDERS Box 11562, Chicago, Ill. 60611-0562

Readers share more of their 'how we met' letters

Dear Ann Landers: My husband and I enjoy your 'how we met' stories immensely. You stopped printing them briefly when a reader said they were "boring," but we were glad to see other readers say how much they enjoyed these letters. In a subsequent column, you said a number of readers wanted to know how those couples managed to stay together for 50 years and longer. One reader wrote, "That would be much more interesting than how they met." Well, here's ours:

I was in the Army, and my husband was in the Navy. We had one of the shortest courtships on record. We met on April 17, 1946, and eight weeks later, on June 14, we were married. Last June, we celebrated 52 years of courtship and marriage. We have had our share of rough times and great times. Now, three children and eight grandchildren later, I can say there are three things couples must remember if they want a long-term marriage:

1. Don't give up the ballgame after losing the first few innings. Stay in there, and keep swinging.

2. Recognize the fact that we all change with time — hopefully for the better. Continue to grow.

3. A sense of humor can be the glue that holds marriages together. It surely was a factor in ours. — J.F. in Tarzana, Calif.

Dear Tarzana: Beautiful letter and splendid advice.

Dear Ann Landers: Here is my "how-we-met" story: I met my sweetheart by a water fountain in Minnesota a month before the Pearl Harbor attack. He was the most handsome guy I had ever laid eyes on. It was instant fireworks and obvious to us both that there was combustible chemistry between us, even though he was raised on a farm, and I was a city gal.

Our first official date was New Year's Eve of 1941. We planned to get married, but his obligation to his country intervened. We parted on May 1, 1942, when he was sent to Guadalcanal in the South Pacific. I was terribly lonely and wrote to him every single day, nearly 1,000 letters.

I didn't see my love again until Nov. 10, 1944. We were married three days later. We have been together for 53 years, through thick and thin, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Our secret? Sharing, caring, love, faith, fidelity and prayer. — Lorraine in Lakeville, Minn.

Dear Lorraine: Your letter will be an inspiration to many.

Dear Ann Landers: A first cousin of mine was buried last week. After the services, my husband and I went to a restaurant for lunch.

I learned the next day that the daughter of the deceased had had a big spread at her home after the service. We were not invited. I feel hurt and insulted. Should I tell her? — New Jersey

Dear New Jersey: It is customary for relatives to gather at the home of the deceased after a funeral. Friends and neighbors bring casseroles and platters. No invitations are issued. People just go. View this as a learning experience.

HOROSCOPE

THOSE WITH TODAY'S BIRTHDAY: The lure of investment could be a strong attraction for you in the year ahead. You'll do okay if you do your homework first, and deal only with reputable outfits.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) Indecision is your nemesis today, especially in matters affecting others. A wishy-washy attitude could be contagious.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) Don't turn your back on a friend who needs your help today. You won't like yourself later if you pass up the opportunity to lend a hand.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23) A well-intentioned friend might provide you with information s/he thinks could make or save you money today. Unfortunately, this person could be way off base.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22) In order to gain status with your co-workers today, you may be tempted to promise something you can't deliver. Don't do it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 21) You might be too glib for your own good today. If someone tells you s/he caught the Loch Ness Monster, insist on a photograph.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) Loss of small-but-valuable possessions is a possibility today, so don't leave your rings on the wasteland or your purse at the tennis courts.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 19) A friend of yours who is an accomplished time-waster might disrupt your schedule today. Don't let him/her linger too long over the morning coffee and donuts.

Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20) Do nothing to encourage loose tongues to wag about your activities today. Keep everything out in the open — just to frustrate the gossips.

Aries (March 21-April 19) Friends you'll be involved with today won't be impressed by airs or affectations. Pretenses will produce the opposite of whatever you hope to achieve.

Taurus (April 20-May 20) Someone you perceive as an ally might not be as supportive as you think today. At the present time, this individual's intentions aren't in harmony with yours.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) Your thinking may be impractical and disjointed today. Don't waste time and effort designing a vehicle with square wheels.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) You could make some bad buys when shopping today if you're more concerned about the label than the contents of the box. Don't be dazzled by fancy packaging.

Bernice Bede Osol / Newspaper Enterprise Association

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Arginton

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

Let's have the ceremony here. We need a guest list, invitations, flowers, rice.

IMPORTANT FOR AN ASTROLOGIST'S WEDDING.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: THE " " " " (Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: PIPER WHINE HORROR PACKET Answer: What the tow truck operator often feels like — A WRECK

CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 — nous

6 Young girl

10 Absolute ruler

12 Shelled

14 Neither masculine nor feminine

15 Sedative

16 Had a meal

17 Globe

19 Actress

20 Put into motion

23 Newspaper, radio, etc.

26 Sgt., e.g.

27 Pale

30 Washed away

32 Winter melon

34 Texas city (2 wds.)

35 Sea hawk

36 Type of shirt

37 Unit of Siamese currency

39 Heavy books

40 Showiest, in a way

42 Author Grey

45 Demon

DOWN

1 Sicilian volcano

2 Russian no

3 Not false

4 Rodent

5 Compass pt.

6 Baby's sitting spot?

7 Stay

8 Kill

9 Bristle

11 Horse pace

12 Cigarette filler

13 Cozy room

18 Move fast

20 Verdi opera

21 Type of salad

22 Breakfast breads

23 Run into

24 Writer — Stanley Gardner

25 Private info

27 — up (practice)

28 Busy as

29 Negatives

31 Finishing the 's

33 Dick and Jane's dog

38 Tidy —

40 Eagle's nest

41 Long heroic poem

42 Small organisms

43 Not much (2 wds.)

44 Roman tyrant

46 Wax

47 Get ready for a trip

48 Bar brews

50 Switch positions

52 Tier

53 Owning

DOONESBURY

Garry Trudeau is on vacation until Aug. 10. These strips appeared the week of July 7, 1997.

THE STUPIDITY OF QUOTAS IS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT HERE IN WASHINGTON. I MEAN, WHO'S THE MINORITY? BLACKS OUTNUMBER WHITES...

WAIT A MINUTE! THE ALIENS ARE INVOLVED IN THE COVER-UP TOO?

WHY NOT? THEY HELPED COVER UP THE JFK MURDER!

THERE ARE SIX WOMEN FOR EVERY MAN...

AND 30 LAWYERS FOR EVERY HUMAN BEING...

I HATE BEING SO UNINFORMED.

GOOD POINT.

PEOPLE FORGET THAT.

TO ORDER THE MALLARD FILMORE BOOKS, CALL (800) 642-6480 AND MENTION THE BIRMINGHAM POST-HERALD. \$9.95 PLUS \$2 SHIPPING.

Juno e-mail printed Tue, 22 Jun 1999 14:08:58 , page 1

From: BHRPL4114L@aol.com

Return-path: <BHRPL4114L@aol.com>

To: BHRPL4114L@aol.com, OyvayO@aol.com, hhrivas@wwisp.com,
 Lisasanter@aol.com, abutler@uab.edu, Sumansbach@aol.com,
 GMansbach@aol.com, GBMDUGLAS@aol.com, hubertz@mindspring.com,
 Jack.Zylman@mail.house.gov, jzylman@igc.apc.org, Smlsmt@aol.com,
 mwilson@sbs.sbs.uab.edu, lisahermes@juno.com, kcanada@uab.edu,
 KMJX@aol.com, kincaid@uab.edu, Gjo@aol.com,
 fpaige@compuserve.com, ThePasss@aol.com, drdoom@uab.edu,
 Stripes70@aol.com, sbrotsky@att.net,
 c750366@showme.missouri.edu, adalong@uab.edu, Plae157@aol.com,
 RHMont4@aol.com, Vvolker@civmail.circ.uab.edu,
 105365.2674@compuserve.com, revmarge@juno.com,
 humanscale@earthlink.net, bbt@alabama.com, ShSchaffer@aol.com,
 TCHAKAZULU@aol.com, HMalmquist@aol.com, bham_ara@hotmail.com,
 sanyasi@juno.com, Forhkbh@aol.com, MATTNFWM@aol.com,
 wholt@law.ua.edu, rbrownstein@spicenter.org,
 artler@bellsouth.net, mangofarms@mindspring.com,
 LAUGHBFLY@aol.com, HMiyagawa@aol.com, uucbham@worldnet.att.net,
 tsheffield@mindspring.com, jim.price@sierraclub.org,
 nprice@cancer.org, monkzmuz@hotmail.com

Date: Sun, 20 Jun 1999 08:35:28 EDT

Subject: Fwd: He's Baaa-ack!

Message-ID: <94a2471d.249e3a10@aol.com>

X-Status: Read

X-Mailer: AOL 4.0 for Windows 95 sub 246

This was sent to us from Dail whom I believe is associated with UAB....

=====

Thought all you folks would enjoy this one...

By The Associated Press

ROANOKE, Va. (AP) -- The Rev. Jerry Falwell's newspaper, which previously claimed that a popular "Teletubbies" character is a gay role model, now asserts that the all-female Lilith Fair concert tour is named for a demon.

More than 800,000 people attended the summer concert series last year. The third and final tour begins July 8 and features artists including Sheryl Crow, The Dixie Chicks and Queen Latifah.

"Many young people no doubt attend the Lilith Fair concerts not knowing the demonic legend of the mystical woman whose name the series manifests," says the Parents Alert column in the June issue of National Liberty Journal.

According to ancient Jewish literature, Lilith was created by God as Adam's first wife, but left Eden after refusing to be submissive to Adam.

The Lilith Fair got its name from the character's original aspect, a woman seeking equality and independence, tour publicist Ambrosia Healy said Friday.

But the column in Falwell's conservative Christian newspaper says there are many conflicting accounts of the Lilith character.

According to pagan legend, it said, Lilith dwelled with demons after leaving Eden and went mad after witnessing the

execution of her children. "As a result, she went on a killing spree, seducing and murdering her own demonic male offspring and then slaying their children."

Falwell was ridiculed after the same column in February asserted that the creators of the "Teletubbies" TV series for toddlers intended the character Tinky Winky as a gay role model.

"This Lilith Fair alert is certain to draw more fire, but we are willing to take the heat in order to document the truth behind the benign appearance of this music festival," said the article by senior editor J.M. Smith.

A spokeswoman for Falwell, Beth Bragg, said Friday that the Lynchburg minister had not read the column in the newspaper, in which he is listed as editor and publisher, and wouldn't comment.

"But he has the highest regard and confidence in his editor," she said.

The Lilith character also became the namesake of the Independent Jewish Women's Magazine. Editor Susan Weidman said Jewish scholars demonized Lilith hundreds of years ago because they were threatened by the idea of a strong woman who insisted on equality.

"Clearly, some of that is going on now with people like Jerry Falwell," she said.